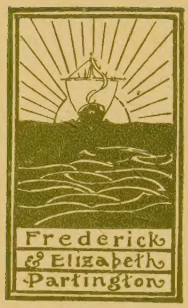
Life of Adrienne d'Ayen Marquise de La Fayette

by

Marguerite Guilhou

Chavaniac



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Life of Adrienne d'Ayen, Marquise de La Fayette

by

Marguerite Guilhou

Translated from the French
by
S. Richard Fuller

Ralph Fletcher Seymour
Chicago

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The translator is indebted to the Honorable Charlemagne Tower for permission to use this rare portrait of La Marquise de La Fayette. Mr. Tower writes: "The etching was made for me in 1894 by Mr. Rosenthal from a photograph of a miniature sent to me by the Marquise de Chambrun. It was painted at the time of the marriage of Madame de La Fayette";—to the members of the French Heroes La Fayette Memorial Fund for their photographs of the Château de Chavaniac, where, in fidelity to their American ideals, they are answering the "Cry of the Children" of the slain soldiers of France;—to Mr. E. F. Bonaventure for the use of his beautiful portrait of La Fayette by Duplessis;—to Miss Marian M. Sands of the Print and Engraving Department of the Library of Congress for her generous aid.

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A Monsieur S. Richard Fuller.
Cher Monsieur Fuller,

Votre nom est le premier que je désire lire au commencement de ces pages. Avant la guerre —dans votre paisible et charmant appartement de Paris—au milieu du cénacle d'amis et de lettrés, dont Mme. Fuller et vous étiez l'âme— ma modeste initiative littéraire est née de votre exemple! Vous avez bien voulu, maintenant, vous en faire le traducteur amical, malgré la dépense incessante de temps, d'énergie, et de talent que vous consacrez si généreusement à votre grande oeuvre "des Evacués du Monde."

Je désirerais que l'Etude sur Mme. de Lafayette, si elle a quelque succés, puisse ajouter encore à tous ceux que vous recueillez dans vos belles conférences, et soit, aussi, un témoignage de la sincère et profonde reconnaissance de,

votre amie,

MARGUERITE GUILHOU.

Paris, ce 20 *Mars,* 1918.
191 *rue de l'Université.*

Life of La Marquise de La Fayette

Chateau de Chavaniac
Auvergne

Life of La Marquise de Lafayette

THE five daughters of Jean François de Noailles, Duke D'Ayen, and of the Duchess, née Henriette d'Aguesseau, were born in the Noailles mansion in Paris, situated, in the eighteenth century, in the Rue de Rivoli, nearly opposite the Church of St. Roch.

Here they lived until their marriage, Louise de Noailles, Adrienne d'Ayen, Clotilde d'Epernon, Pauline de Maintenon, and Rosalie de Montclair, and here they had a happy childhood. The great court planted with trees, extending as far as the Tuileries Garden, was green and full of sunshine and of the song of birds, and of the gayety of the five sisters, a gayety often aroused by merry but innocent teasings to which they subjected their teacher, Mlle. Marin, a little person, dry, thin, blond, pinched, susceptible, devoted to her duties and fulfilling them admirably.

At times Mlle. Marin took her young pupils and their friends on little picnics in the woods of Meu-

don. Here they would have donkey rides. But Mlle. Marin was so ill at ease and bewildered on her donkey that the frolicsome young girls, while suppressing their laughter, were greatly amused, especially when Mlle. Marin would slide off on to the grass, without being in the least hurt by the fall. She would take them also to St. Germain to see their grandfather, the Maréchal de Noailles. What souvenirs for later days! What happy hours spent in running through the green forest! And when fatigue obliged them to seek more tranquil pleasures—playing games of loto, which the Maréchal gaily lost.

But the centre, the soul of this home life, was the mother, the Duchess d'Ayen herself; a woman of remarkable virtue, depth of character, tender and sincere heart, high spirit and superior mind. She regulated and supervised carefully the entire education of her daughters. Without attaching too much importance to fixed rules in her plans for their instruction, she sought, first of all, to develop their individual personality, and to guide each child in the path best suited to her own nature. She considered that her children should be the first object of her solicitude and care, and she devoted to them the greater part of her waking hours. Early in the morning she gathered them for her morning

greeting and her tender kiss. Then, on her return from mass at St. Roch, which she attended daily, she again joined them. Frequently she was present during their lessons. At three o'clock she dined with them in one of the sumptuous halls of the Noailles mansion, and then took them to her own bedroom, a vast chamber hung with heavy crimson damask silk bordered with gold, with an immense bed draped with superb hangings. Here she sat in a little arm-chair, a table at her side with her snuff box, her books, her needles, and surrounding her, her five daughters, some in chairs, others seated on low tabourets, disputing, gently, which should sit nearest to her, and all hanging upon the words from their mother's lips, who regarded conversation as the best and the most important means of education.

The second daughter, Adrienne d'Ayen, who became later Madame de La Fayette, had a quick mind which seized upon difficulties with a determination to solve them. She had acquired the habit of arguing. "I must seem very disputatious," she said to her mother, "because you allow us to present our objections, but you shall see, Mamma, when we are fifteen, that we shall be more docile than other girls." It is true that Madame d'Ayen patiently listened to all their reasonings with unwearying kindness, but

she refuted them in such a fashion as to satisfy and to convince the child to whom she spoke.

Then there were readings aloud from the most beautiful selections of French literature and poetry. Comments on the lessons received from their teachers were made, and the Duchess taught her daughters the art of dictating letters, even before they had learned to write. "Everything was done for us," says Madame de La Fayette in her biography of her mother, written in circumstances we shall understand later. "All her faculties were bent on accomplishing our welfare, and on preparing our future happiness. The integrity and strength of her mind banished from our education all puerilities, and accustomed us from childhood to reason clearly and accurately. Her lively tenderness cemented the bond of parent and child, and her charming eloquence, corroborated by her daily example, made us understand Christian virtue, which is the principle, the support and the reward of virtue."

"How grateful will be her daughters," writes Pauline de Maintenon, Marquise de Montaigu, "to have been brought up under the guidance of this incomparable mother, to be animated by sentiments that are always true, to fear even the appearance of evil, to despise riches, and to know and serve God." Madame d'Ayen's religion was strong and

La Marquise de La Fayette
From a miniature in the possession of the family

sober; the fervor of her glowing piety was touched by an austerity a little Jansenist; and Adrienne inherited from her mother, from childhood, a scrupulous conscientiousness, which led her to put off her first communion until she was fourteen and until after her marriage. She then received it with touching faith and piety.

As to the Duke d'Ayen, the father, he was everywhere except at home. He interested himself in chemistry, in the opera, in the affairs of the Court; and his life was passed in this amiable and conversational world of the eighteenth century, where his rank, his wit and his elegance placed him at the front. This maternal training, therefore, was the formative influence of the youth of the five sisters, who, thus prepared for the future to which their birth destined them, became not only the model of that society but its ornament, and left there the mark of that heroism and piety at which the world still marvels.

When Adrienne (d'Ayen) had reached twelve years her marriage became the subject of discussion. Her parents were approached in reference to the young Marquis de La Fayette, then fourteen. The Marquis de La Fayette—"Marie Joseph Yves *Gilbert* de Mortier, Marquis de La Fayette"—belonged to an illustrious house of France, and counted among

his nearest ancestors the Marquise de La Fayette, author of "The Princess of Clèves," and of "Zaïde," written about 1678.

"Gilbert" was born in an old *manoir* of the 14th century at Chavaniac, in Auvergne, in 1757, a few weeks after the death of his father, killed at twenty-five at the battle of Meuden. It was in this château, flanked by four towers and surmounted by a belfry, built upon the heights and commanding the valley of the river Allier, that the young La Fayette was brought up by his mother and his two aunts, Mesdames de Chavaniac and de Mortier. He had as preceptor a scholarly man, the Abbé Fujon. But few reminiscences remain of this solitary and retired life of his childhood. However, it is recounted that the young Gilbert soon made apparent his intrepidity and daring. At eight he scoured woods and mountains hunting a hyena which had escaped from a menagerie, which it was his dream to find and kill (!) to the great alarm and terror of the feminine household whose watchfulness he had evaded! At eleven he was sent to Paris to pursue more serious studies. At this time he lost his mother and thus found himself in possession of a very considerable fortune. For his military education he was entrusted by his grandfather to an officer of distinction, and at fourteen he entered the Military Academy of

Versailles. Like all the young gentlemen of that period he came out from Versailles with his commission the following year.

Then it was that, at fifteen, his marriage with Mademoiselle d'Ayen was considered. But the Duchess, her mother, refused her consent to this union. She thought it premature, in view of the youth of the suitor, and dangerous because his youth was unprotected and his fortune too early acquired. But the Duke d'Ayen, her father, insisted, and the following year the two children met each other in the drawing room of the Noailles mansion in Paris.

Young La Fayette was very tall, with red hair, awkward in his manners and quite shy, as boys of that age are apt to be. His dancing was without grace; his game of paume not brilliant. But he was known as serious, of an excellent character, of a bravery without equal, and liked by all of his comrades, with whom he was generous and kind. He pleased Adrienne who, a brunette, pretty, with a sweet and intelligent expression and modest and charming bearing, pleased him equally. And the Duchess "accepted for son-in-law," says her daughter, "him whom, since then, she has not ceased to cherish as a son, and of whom she has felt the great value from the first moment she knew him."

The marriage was celebrated the 11th April 1774,

in the chapel of the Noailles mansion. The child wife was not quite fifteen, and the young husband not yet seventeen. But the mutual attraction had forestalled, with these children, that profound and tender sentiment which was to unite and fortify them during the thirty-four years of their married life through incessant changes of grief and joy.

The first two years of this union were absorbed in presenting the young couple at Court and in taking their position in the world. It does not appear that Monsieur and Madame de La Fayette very much enjoyed this life of fêtes and pleasures in which they had to take part. He himself, concealing under an exterior cold and distant, a most active mind, a firm disposition, and a soul on fire, lent himself but little to the graces of the Court; and a life of dissipation was not calculated to please Madame de La Fayette any more. She attended, however, with her elder sister, Louise de Noailles, married before her to her cousin, the Viscount of Noailles, all the plays and all the balls of the Court, when she found it a matter of duty, and she gave herself to it freely and without scruple.

Her attachment for her husband grew stronger and stronger, and already dominated her completely.

In 1776 she had a daughter whom she named Henriette. It was the summer of this same year

Le Marquis de La Fayette
General Commander of the National Guard of Paris, 1789.
Painted by Duplessis, 1725 to 1802
Original in the possession of Mr. E. F. Bonaventure of New York

that La Fayette met at dinner at the Count de Broglie's, the Duke of Gloucester, brother of the King of England. The subject of conversation during all the dinner was the declaration of independence of America; the young officer was full of enthusiasm for a question which he heard discussed for the first time, a question fitted to interest his mind filled with liberal thoughts and aspirations. He resolved then and there to go to serve the cause of the Americans, a cause which Europe, and especially France, did not tarry in espousing passionately, aroused by the courageous audacity of those who were then called the "Insurgents" and the "Bostonians." Fashion followed the general admiration, and in the drawing rooms the English game of "whist" was replaced by another game, no less grave, which was called "Boston."

"This movement," comments Monsieur de Ségur, "although it appears quite insignificant, was a notable forecast of those great conversions to which the whole world later devoted itself."

The Duke d'Ayen, zealously opposed to the departure of his son-in-law, and desirous that he should accept a position at the Court, did all in his power to make the venture fail. He persuaded the Minister, Monsieur de Maurepas, to send the young man a letter of restraint, and an order, in the name

of the King, to go to Italy. But La Fayette made his escape from all these entanglements, and embarked from Spain the 26th April 1777, after six months of perseverance and effort. The ship had been bought and equipped at his own expense, and he gave it the name of La Victoire. Little Madame de La Fayette bore with courage this first separation, yet with all the sensitiveness of her extreme youth. Already sharer in the convictions of her husband, she admired him in all he undertook, and, helped and sustained by her mother, by whose side she remained, she judged this expedition, as it has since been judged by posterity, and did all in her power to calm the irritation of her father, the Duke. Shortly before the departure of La Fayette they had both attended the marriage of Monsieur de Ségur, and as everybody there was violently opposed to the plan of Monsieur de La Fayette, she hid her tears and maintained a calm exterior, not to seem to be in affliction, for fear they should bear malice against her husband. For him also the parting was painful, and his letters were full of tenderness and tears, which he did not hesitate to express in French fashion.

I would like to give proof of this by extracts from two of his letters.

On Board La Victoire, 30 May 1777.

I am very far away from you as I write, my dear heart, and to this cruel distance is added the uncertainty, still more distressing, of when I can get any news from you. What stirrings of soul, what fears I must add to the chagrin, so acute, of leaving you! You, who to me are the dearest possession in the world. How will you bear my departure? Will you love me any less for it? Have you reflected that in any case I would have to be separated from you, wandering in Italy, and there leading a life without any glory? I have experienced—believe it!—frightful agitations of heart in those terrible moments which bore me away from the shore! If you but knew all that I suffered in thinking of you, of Henriette, of my friends!

7 June.

You will admit, dear heart, that the occupation and the life I am to have are very different from those which were in store for me in the futile journey to Italy.

Defender of that liberty which I idolize, coming myself freer than any one else to offer the services of a friend to that interesting republic, I bear with me only my sincerity and my

good will; no ambition; no personal interest. In laboring for my own glory, I labor for the prosperous issue of their efforts. I hope on my account you will become *a good American.* It is a sentiment suited to virtuous hearts. The welfare of America is bound closely to the welfare of all humanity. She is to become the honored and safe asylum of liberty!

Adieu! Darkness does not suffer me to continue longer. But if my fingers were to follow my heart, I should need no daylight to tell you how I suffer far away from you, and how I love you.

To follow La Fayette in America from 1777 to 1784 all his correspondence with his wife would have to be quoted during the three expeditions which he made.

From the very first the optimism, the bravery, the firmness, and above all the disinterestedness of this young hero of nineteen, won for him the attention of the United States and the rank of General in the army. He fought at Brandywine, near Philadelphia, was wounded there; placed himself again as quickly as possible at the head of his soldiers, had the mission entrusted to him of administering in all the northern states the oath of repudiation of the King of England; and also succeeded in so electrify-

ing public opinion in France that the treaty of commerce between that nation and the United States was signed.

The second time, in 1780, he joined Washington and Rochambeau in that great adventure which resulted in the glorious campaign in Virginia, the capitulation, in 1781, of the British army, and the assurance of liberty and prosperity to the Americans.

Finally his voyage in 1784 had for its essential feature his solemn reception by the American Congress. It was then, with the benedictions of a whole people, that he set sail from Boston, after superb fêtes, and the touching farewells of Washington, of whom he was proud to call himself the friend, the adopted son and the disciple.

It is not within the scope of my present purpose to touch more upon these exciting events. But in passing I cannot fail to admire the profound and warm friendship which bound the young French officer to the American General. Washington had for La Fayette the tenderest affection which marked his whole conduct. He admired the fact that the young nobleman had fled from the most elegant court of Europe in order to offer his sword in aid of the simple planters of Pennsylvania. His religious soul was gratified with the disinterestedness of his friend, to whom in his faithful correspondence, and during

the commencement of the Revolution in France, he never ceased to give the most affectionate and the most sagacious counsel. As to La Fayette, he felt that he owed the achievement of his moral value to his contact with Washington, with the man whose nobility, dignity, delicacy and serenity of soul were unequalled among the most noted examples of antiquity, and for whom he had conceived most profound veneration. He led Madame de La Fayette to share these sentiments, and when they had a son he was called George, and Washington became his godfather. "General Washington is moved by what I have told him of you," writes La Fayette to Adrienne in 1780; "he charges me to present to you his tenderest sentiments. He has much feeling for our son, and is very much touched by the name that we have given him."

Each return and each departure of the Marquis de La Fayette caused conflicting emotions in his wife; the intoxication of joy at his arrival, the pain, the anguish of his absence. "Her sentiment for him," writes her daughter, Madame de Lasteyrie, "had been deepened by her anxieties and by the charm of the moments passed at her husband's side." She was not constituted for the exciting agitations of glory; and would have preferred a life of calm and retirement within her own family. But her alert

mind, her glowing imagination, and her firm, though precocious, reasoning powers, made her a worthy companion of a husband of whom she was proud. The little family grew. The first child, Henriette, died at twenty-two months during the first expedition of her father to America, but Anastasie, George and the little Virginie came in their turn to console and brighten the home. These children spoke English as fluently as French. They played and laughed with the Americans who came constantly to visit their parents, and in a letter written in 1787, Xavier de Schomberg describes to his mother the details of this charming and simple household.

During the five years following his final return from America La Fayette was not idle. He wished to perfect his culture and his military talent by going to visit the foreign courts, England and Prussia; then he took an active part in France to restore the official registration of the Protestants.

This was in 1788, and his wife, who combined the most liberal principles of tolerance with the most ardent religious zeal, helped him and approved his course in this courageous campaign.

Passionately interested in the "American question," the General had bought a property at Cayenne, and dreamt of being near Washington to devote himself to the emancipation of the negroes. The re-

ligious soul of Madame de La Fayette was equally pleased with this project and she labored already as a propagandist with the missionaries and with the Americans with whom her husband had begged her to correspond. But it was not for America that they departed!

The crisis which was to overturn France became each day more imminent, and La Fayette, champion of new ideas and of noble enthusiasms, already was playing his rôle in political reform. With his brother-in-law, the Viscount de Noailles, also recently returned from America, he had become the oracle of the greater part of the youth of France. There was indeed a frankness, a warmth and often a sincere disinterestedness in the manner of discussing, in the drawing room, the necessity of the reforms which were pressing, and in the two or three years preceding 1789 it would be astonishing to find how many of the nobility had reached the point of wishing for more of justice in social matters, and more of liberty in the government.

"Those who have lived during these times," says Madame de Staël, "cannot fail to admit that there never has been seen so much life and so much wit anywhere, and one gets a conception of it by the crowds of men of talent, whom circumstances brought to the front at that time. Never was society so

brilliant as during the four or five years which preceded 1791. In no country, in no period, has the art of conversation in all its forms been so remarkable."

Soon conversation engendered strife. Monsieur de La Fayette preached the abrogation of ancient privilege, and would have renounced for himself even, as well as for his family, the most substantial advantages, in the hope of establishing in France a government of freedom.

The Duchess, who liked and admired her sons-in-law, did not share their illusions. She foresaw that in gazing at the stars one would end by tumbling into pitfalls. And in a grave malady which she had at this time, and which she believed to be mortal, she called about her her daughters, and predicted, with a strange lucidity, the dangers which they were about to encounter. These young women were absorbed, first of all, with their households, and with the poor and with prisoners whom they visited in their cells; and their lives were passed in doing good, relieving morally and physically those who seemed worthy of pity. Adrienne, however, more than the others, regardless of her early education, shared the liberal ideas of her husband, and professed them with frankness, while preserving a delicacy which it would be difficult to describe, and which protected her from being a "party woman."

Monsieur de La Fayette, possibly to increase his popularity, kept open house, and his wife did the honors with charming grace, skilfully receiving each guest as her husband would wish, yet preserving her own independence when it had to do with persons whose presence or whose utterances would have offended her attachment to the Catholic faith, which she felt herself bound to emphasize the more, in view of her personal position. She received the Sisters of the religious orders who asked for protection. She encouraged the priests who had not taken the civil oath under the law of 1790, and attended faithfully the services in the oratories. Madame de Lasteyrie, who relates this, adds: "No consideration made my mother hesitate when it concerned a duty to be done. In fulfilling the duty she found consolation on frequent occasions in showing my father her respect for liberty of worship, and her firmness in maintaining it."

But I have not here to dwell upon the history of the French Revolution, nor upon that of the Marquis de La Fayette during those three years when his fame "surpassed that of a Necker or a Mirabeau." Adored by the people whose interests he championed; defender of the King, but wishing a constitutional King who should have no power more than the President of the United States; a "suspect"

Général de La Fayette
Deputy from Auvergne to the National Assembly in 1789
Painted by Guérin

among the Royalists, as later he became among the Jacobins, he was in turn acclaimed and derided, heeded and calumniated.

Made Commander of the "Place de Paris," he had to hold in leash an immense population, "exalted even to intoxication and stirred even to the very dregs." Yet notwithstanding his great popularity and devotion, he could not stay the assassinations, though at times the assassins themselves were arrested by his own command.

Twice he presented his resignation, to the great joy of Madame de La Fayette, who was constantly concerned and anxious, and who, the second time, agreed to receive, representing her husband, the municipality and the delegates of sixty battalions who came to implore La Fayette to resume his office of Commander. She was not at all embarrassed in responding to the leaders, and in giving to the famous Santerre, who was the cause of this resignation, the reasons why her husband had resigned; only too glad to fulfill this delicate task which permitted their return to private life. This satisfaction was not of long duration. La Fayette, having yielded to the wish of all the citizens of the Capital, resumed the duties of his office. At that moment he was literally adored and his influence was absolute upon the people. But after the Federation (cele-

brated in 1790) the cries of hate succeeded the cries of loyalty; and one night after a day of street fighting when Madame de La Fayette had trembled for the life of her husband, she heard a furious crowd coming to their house in the Rue de Lille, where she lived since she had left the Noailles mansion. The cry, "Down with La Fayette!"—"Death to La Fayette!" reached her ears. The General had not come home. They swore they would cut off the head of his wife and put it on the point of a lance to greet him as he returned. Calm, she kissed her children, and then hid them. Then she barred the doors and stationed the guards, which luckily had been doubled. The assailants went to the rear of the house, climbed the wall of the garden, and were about to gain entrance to the house when a troop of cavalry put them to flight.

At length, after the arrest of Louis XVI at Varenne, his return to the Tuileries, his acceptance of the constitutional act, and the vote by which the Assembly adopted unanimously, upon the proposal of La Fayette, the general amnesty, it was believed that a new era had begun. And France had a few days of delirious joy.

The 8th October La Fayette, having tasted his last hours of popularity, left Paris with his family for Chavaniac. The feeling of deliverance Madame de

La Fayette experienced can be imagined. The whole journey was a triumph for her husband. Through towns and villages as they passed she did not cease to rejoice at what she believed to be the end of his political career. Arriving near the château de Plauzat, where the sister of Madame de La Fayette, Pauline de Maintenon, Marquise de Montaigu, lived, they could not be received because Monsieur de Beaune, father-in-law of the Marquise, did not approve of the ideas of Monsieur de La Fayette, and would not suffer him to come under his roof.

They made, therefore, a little halt at Vaire, in Auvergne, near the Château de Chavaniac, where Madame de Montaigu came furtively to greet the travelers. It was evening, at sunset. The young châtelaine of the château, accompanied by two faithful and discreet domestics, slipped into the obscure little inn where she was to find her relatives, while outside the villagers were welcoming the General. The two sisters rejoiced in seeing each other again, and exchanging confidences. Madame de La Fayette, become an optimist under the influences of her husband, believed the revolution finished, and hoped to grow old in peace at Chavaniac, surrounded by children and husband. Madame de Montaigu, who had consented to follow her husband and her father-in-law as "émigrés," wept, overcome by dark forebodings.

On both sides the adieux were touching. Madame de Chavaniac, lovable and spirited, received her family with open arms, and soon the Duchess de Noailles and her daughter Louise, Viscountess de Noailles, the favorite sister of Adrienne, arrived to complete the joy of this reunion. They remained two weeks at Chavaniac, and this repose was balm to the heart of Madame de La Fayette, who little thought this meeting was to be their last! As to the General, "he had preserved such simplicity of habits," says his wife, "after three years in the midst of such storms, that he found comfort in the tranquility of the scenes of his childhood, and in a sweet flower of sentiment which made him happy,—the presence of Madame de Chavaniac and Madame d'Ayen whom he cherished as two mothers." "I rejoice like a lover," he writes the 20th October 1791, "in the liberty, the equality, the fundamental change which has put all citizens upon the same level, and which honors only the legal authorities." "I have as much pleasure, and perhaps as much 'amour-propre' in this absolute repose, as I have had in fifteen years of public activity. Nothing now save the duty of our self defence can drag me away from private life."

This "duty" came quickly to him. The General, appointed by Monsieur de Narbonne commander of

one of the armies then being formed, left Chavaniac two months later, at the end of December, 1791, to assume command. War was declared in March, 1792. Madame de La Fayette remained with her children in Aubergne near Madame de Chavaniac, more and more consumed with anxiety about her husband, as the daily papers and her letters from him brought her intelligence of his struggles, and of that period, so dramatic, which at the close left him but the choice between the scaffold and exile. She knew that after the horrors of the 10 June he had no fear of writing to the Legislative Assembly to severely reproach them for violences committed at the Tuileries, demanding punishment of the guilty, and coming himself to the tribunal to sustain the conviction which had dictated his letter. After that he offered his services to the King, and invited him to take refuge with the army, but without success. On his return to camp he was informed that he had been removed from command by the Assembly, and ordered to trial. The rôle of moderator he had wanted to play had aroused the hatred of Robespierre, who exclaimed, "Let us all unite to accuse La Fayette!"

A terrible example must be made of him.

Then seeing in the army his popularity destroyed and his influence compromised, the General became

aware that the Revolution, of which he had been so sincerely the elder son, had turned against him, so that he was driven to find an asylum in a neutral country, to save his life now proscribed, in the hope of one day still serving France and the cause of liberty.

With ten other officers he left in the middle of the night, hoping to reach England, but at the frontier he encountered an Austrian guard and was immediately arrested. Taken to Namur, then to Coblentz, finally he was lodged in the prison of Magdebourg, as were also Messieurs de Latour-Maubourg, Bureau de Pusy and de Lameth.

The rôle he had played, the influence he had exerted, aroused instantly, as he himself said, a sort of European concert, "where it was found that Monsieur de La Fayette was not only the champion of the French Revolution, but of universal liberty, and that his existence was incompatible with the safety of the governments of Europe." But Madame de La Fayette breathed more freely when she learned that her husband was out of France. But "this La Fayette, whose shoes were adoringly kissed" in 1790, was now no more than the worst of scoundrels, and his flight put in peril all who belonged to him. Feeling herself menaced, she sent away her children from Chavaniac, and established

all these in a domain sufficiently near with Monsieur Frestel, preceptor of her son George. But Anastasie, the eldest daughter, then fifteen, could not endure the thought of not sharing the fate of her mother, and came back to Chavaniac the 9th September, bringing back her sister and their governess. The morning of the 10th, while the sisters are dressing, a noise is heard in the direction of the village upon the main thoroughfare, which continues to increase, till suddenly the Court of Honor of the Château is filled with armed men. The terrified domestics scatter and hide. Madame de La Fayette, who was writing to her husband, seated in her room, has no time to get up from her chair; the chamber is invaded. The Marquise is immovable; she seems to be as entirely at ease in the midst of these furious men as in the drawing rooms of her mother, or in those of the rue de Lille, her own. She approaches the chief and asks his orders, and when she sees that resistance is impossible, she announces that she is ready to follow, and while the pillagers search the wardrobes and every corner, she thinks only of her children, and gives orders in a low voice to a faithful servant to hide them. But Anastasie enters and kisses her mother, calling her "Mamma," in order that she could not remain unknown. "I am of an age to be arrested with my mother," she says.

Madame de La Fayette, notwithstanding her perplexity, replies, "You are right, my child. Your father would be proud of you." But she wishes that the little Virginie might be spared, and succeeds in hiding her in the fire-place.

Madame de Chavaniac appears. She is seventy-three and is so rooted in her surroundings and attached to her château that no consideration has ever been able to decide her to go elsewhere. But she declares she must accompany her niece, and the three ladies mount the carriages got ready in haste. Nothing compromising among the papers was found. A few days before Madame de La Fayette had burnt everything. They arrive the next day at noon at Puy. Here the Directory of the Department was in session. The prisoners are taken before them, and Madame de La Fayette makes an earnest plea in behalf of her husband. Making no concessions either to Royalists or to Jacobins, she was simple and touching, and not fearing to declare herself an enthusiast for the opinions of her husband, she exclaimed: "When he shall have become a traitor, I consent to be beheaded."

Discussion followed, but the department did not consider itself authorized to set her at liberty. She was held in custody with Madame de Chavaniac and Anastasie until orders arrived from Roland.

It was from Puy that Madame de La Fayette wrote to Brissot that famous letter: "I believe you a genuine fanatic for liberty. I am sure that you admire—I would almost say that you esteem—Monsieur de La Fayette; therefore I address myself to you. If it were wished absolutely to retain me as hostage, my imprisonment would be mitigated by permitting me to choose Chavaniac on parole and on the guarantee of my village. If you wish to serve me you will have the satisfaction of having done a good deed in ameliorating the lot of one unjustly persecuted. I consent to owe you this service. (Signed) Noailles La Fayette."

This "I consent to owe you this service" wounded the armour-proper of Brissot, who caused Roland to send an answer full of insults against La Fayette and against "the superannuated pride of so-called 'nobility.'" But he stopped there, and granted Madame de La Fayette what she had requested. The three ladies returned, therefore, on parole to Chavaniac, where they found under the devoted and vigilant protection of Monsieur Frestel, George and Virginie, who had passed through all these recent experiences with the carelessness of youth. For five months Madame de La Fayette was without news of her husband. Unceasingly she sent entreaties, even to the King of Prussia, that the General might be set

at liberty. "Sire," she wrote to Frederick the Great, "Is it that both the enemies of Monsieur de La Fayette, and I myself do not speak with eloquence in his favor? His enemies prove his virtue and how he is to be feared by evil-doers, while I, I show how worthy he is of being loved."

The treason of Dumouriez having caused an increase of the persecution, and the representative of the people, in passing through the country, having said that *"Citizeness"* La Fayette must be arrested, she went to find him at the village of Brioude, and said: "If in every circumstance I would be glad to be surety for Monsieur de La Fayette, I would never be willing to be surety for his enemies," "Citizeness," responded the representative, "these sentiments are worthy of you."

"I am not embarrassed to know, Monsieur, if they are worthy of me. I only wish to be sure that they are worthy of Monsieur de La Fayette."

She did not address any request nor present any petition without signing proudly, "La femme La Fayette."

Her nights and days were passed in a continual agony, and the sole ray of light in all these sad hours was a letter from her husband, which she received through the Minister of the United States, Gouverneur Morris, dated from the prison of Magdebourg.

CHAVANIAC
Tower in which Gilbert Motier de La Fayette was born
September 6th, 1757

More passionately than ever she conceived the longing to go to join him, but to do this she must hand back her parole which she had given, secure safety for her aunt, Madame de Chavaniac, and pay some pressing debts. No longer having any money, the property of her husband having been seized and sold, she applied to Gouverneur Morris, who very generously sent to her the amount she needed, saying that if circumstances should cause to be lost what he had advanced, *the Americans would be responsible for it.* Able thus to quiet the creditors of the General, she made ready for her immediate departure. She hoped that soon liberty would be given to her to quit Chavaniac. While waiting she devoted herself to the pious poor of the village, exhorted them on the future life, tried to distract and take to walk her younger children, and found her consolation with her oldest daughter, Anastasie, this young girl, already so serious and so kind, and who "from childhood," said her mother, "seemed destined to make her feel that in the midst of the greatest ills we are still capable of joy."

This life, relatively calm, lasted but a few months. In January, 1794, took place the selection of the papers "tainted with feudalism," which were carried off with the busts of the King and of Mirabeau, and burnt. This was the preliminary of the arrest of

Madame de La Fayette, which the Revolutionary Committee had just decided upon. The same scene was re-enacted as on the morning of the 10th September, 1792. But this time Madame de La Fayette went out alone notwithtsanding the tears and prayers of Anastasie who wished to follow her. She was taken to Brioude where she was put in prison. When she enters the room where are also in custody (as captives) four or five noble ladies of the region, the reception given her is disconcerting; part of the aristocracy, and above all that of the provinces, detested even the name of La Fayette. She then went into the little adjacent room and took a seat among three *bourgeoises* who received her with kindly warmth. But her sweetness, her condescension, her desire to please and help all who, like her, were in durance, drew to her the heart of *her peers,* and they quickly caught the admiration which she inspired in all those who came near her.

In this prison, where persons of all classes were crowded *pêle-mêle,* hardly separated by a screen, the quarrels and the daily annoyances rendered life still more distressing. Alone, Madame de La Fayette awakened general attachment, so much so that Monsieur Frestel could touch the heart of the jailer and bring to their mother the three children in turn, every two weeks.

But the 8th "Prairial" orders came to conduct the Marquise to the prison "de la Force" at Paris. The captain of the gendarmerie of Brioude came to read to her the order of the Committee of General Safety. All the prisoners, anxious for her, surrounded her. "Have no fear, Mesdames," she said, with calm; "I am only transferred to Paris." She devined too well the menace which this transfer carried with it, and thought of trying to escape, but abandoned it for fear of drawing new rigors upon her companions of the prison of Brioude. Her children, advised of her departure, came to say adieu. Anastasie, supported by the approval of Monsieur Frestel, obtained from her mother permission to follow her, and to go to Paris to the Minister of the United States to ask for help and succor, but she could not get the permit which she went to implore at Puy, which was refused her with coarse jokes and gross insults. Madame de La Fayette took her departure alone in a post chaise, thanks to the devotion of the servants of Chavaniac, who sold their jewels, in order that she should not be carried in a common cart from brigade to brigade till Paris should be reached.

The Marquise remained a fortnight at the Paris prison "de la Force," and was then transferred to that of Plessis, formerly a college where Monsieur

de La Fayette was brought up and which had been made into a prison. This was the moment when Robespierre had organized a terror in "The Terror." Sixty victims each day were sent to the block. Madame de La Fayette waited fifty-two days for her turn, which by miracle never came. Every morning she saw go out a convoy of twenty persons for the scaffold. "The thought that you will soon be of that number," she writes, "makes you stronger for such a spectacle." At Plessis she found her cousin, Madame de Durras. They could not repress their terrible anxiety as to the fate of those dear to them. One day Adrienne had to inform her cousin of the death of her parents, the Duke and Duchess de Mouchy, and she herself lived in the continual fear of learning of that of her own mother and of her sister de Noailles, whom she knew to be in custody in the Luxembourg. When the atrocious Robespierre had perished, and the massacres of the Revolutionary Tribunal ceased, she learned their fate. This is the story:

The 8th October, 1793, the widow, old and feeble, of the Duke de Noailles (Maréchal de Noailles) who had just died, her daughter-in-law, the Duchess d'Ayen and her grand daughter, Louise, Viscountess of Noailles, who had remained near her mother with her children, awaiting more favorable circum-

stances to leave her and join her husband in England —all were arrested and shut up in their own house, the Noailles mansion in Paris, where they were kept till spring. Then they were incarcerated in April in the prison of the Luxembourg, and at length, destined for the block, they were taken to the old Conciergerie where they were offered one cot for three. One of the women prisoners gave her cot to the Maréchale, and Madame d'Ayen seated herself upon the other. But the Viscountess, who at Luxembourg had been heroic in her devotion and filial self-denial, remained standing, replying to those who pressed her to take a little repose, "Why seek repose on the eve of Eternity?" "This angel," says one of the survivors, "was unceasing in prayer; her eyes fixed in contemplation of that heaven which she was about to enter, and her beautiful countenance reflecting the serenity of her soul. Never was seen such calm in such an abiding place of horror." The 22d July 1794, she maintained, as well as her mother, the same serenity in the cart which bore them off to the place of execution. A priest who had promised them his aid during the supreme hour, slipping through the crowd, was able to send them a final absolution. What a spectacle! The storm of horror bursts upon the city. The old lady, the Maréchale, is jostled upon the miserable seat, a board without

any back. The wind blows off her bonnet and tosses her gray hair. The Duchess d'Ayen is the first made to mount the scaffold; her collar is roughly cut. In her striped robe, white and blue, she encourages those about her and remains in an attitude of noble and resigned devotion. When her turn to be sacrificed arrives, the executioner tears out a handful of her hair, her bonnet being held by a single pin. The poignancy of her pain is depicted on her countenance, but is immediately effaced by her sweetness of expression. At length Louise, Viscountess of Noailles, all in white, a veritable angel, an incarnation of purity and love, follows her mother. Her beautiful blond hair is profanely sacrificed, but she had made the sacrifice of her life, and is now concerned only with her fellow sufferers, speaking to a young man who climbs with her the steps of the scaffold, and blasphemes. "Have pity, Monsieur, and ask forgiveness of God." She left three children and a husband she cherished. One cannot linger upon such memories without shuddering. But perhaps in the divine and mysterious plan the blood of such precious and noble victims in pouring out upon the soil of France has expiated her faults and purified her soul.

When Madame de La Fayette learned from Madame de Durras the events of this 22d July her grief was so violent that she no longer wished to live.

"Thank God," she writes to her children, "for having preserved my life, my reason and my strength, and do not regret having been far away from me. God has saved me from a revolt against him, but I would not have been able to bear even the appearance of any human consolation." And at another time to her son: "The thought of following those so dear would have changed for me even into sweetness the awful details of this last agony."

The Terrorist Convention having ended, "drowned in its own blood and exhausted with its own crimes," the prisons were opened, but Madame de La Fayette was retained, the name she bore being execrated by the Revolutionists, who had not been able to drag her husband into their crimes and excesses. Finally, thanks to the zeal of Monsieur Monroe, who had succeeded Gouverneur Morris as Minister of the United States, and to that of Madame de Durras, she was released the 22d January, and rejoined her children at Chavaniac. They came as far as possible on the way to meet their mother, and their joy cheered the Marquise, completely exhausted in body and mind.

This woman, admirable as she was miserable, who had seen her grandfather, her mother, her sister, all her nearest and dearest relatives and friends, dragged to the most awful of deaths of the

block, at the foot of which, one might say, she herself had passed more than a year, having now escaped the claws of the implacable Robespierre, determined to realize her purpose of rejoining her husband! First of all she wished to assure the future of her aunt, and to control that of her son. She decided to send George to America with Monsieur Frestel, and procured the necessary passports, confident that Monsieur de La Fayette would be glad to think of his son surrounded by friends. "I send you my son," she wrote to Washington, "in order that he may pass, near you, a life of calm, where he can resume his studies, interrupted during these three years of distress; where far from those places which could either beat down his soul or too much excite it with indignation, he could work to qualify himself to discharge the duties of a citizen of the United States, whose sentiments and principles would be always in accord with those of a citizen of France."

This departure was heart-rending, and the Marquise, in order to regain a little strength, remained two weeks with her aunt. The Château of Chavaniac had been taken and pillaged during the Terror, and Madame de Chavaniac had not been able to rescue even a bed! But thanks to the sale of the diamonds of the youngest sister of Adrienne, Rosalie de Montclair, Viscountess de Gramont, she was

able to buy back the old family nest. This devoted sister, in passing through Paris from Franche-Comté in Auvergne, came to see Madame de La Fayette the instant she learned of her return. To avoid meeting Terrorists in public vehicles, she and her husband having no money to hire a private carriage, made the long journey on foot, bringing their little children in baskets swung over the back of a horse.

Soon Madame de La Fayette secured the passports so much desired for herself and her daughters, and they embarked at Dunkirk for Hamburg on an American vessel, and then went on to Altona in Prussia. The other sister, beloved of Adrienne, Madame de Montaigu, was there then, a refugee at her aunt's, the Marquise de Tessé. This Madame de Tessé, of whom we shall speak later, was the sister of the Duke d'Ayen, and had always been greatly attached to her nieces and to their husbands, and especially to her nephew, the Marquis de La Fayette, whose liberal and philosophic principles she admired. With wise forethought she had realized upon some securities before emigrating from France, and owing to this relative ease in her finances she had welcomed Madame de Montaigu in a little house which she had rented at Altona, and whose door was always open to those who came to knock there. She learned with joy of the arrival of

Adrienne and her daughters. As to Madame Montaigu, still under the horrible memory of the massacre of her mother and of her sister, she experienced a terrible emotion in again seeing Madame de La Fayette, in talking over with her those distressing events. Aided by Madame de Tessé, she did all in her power to dissuade the travellers from carrying out their plan of going to General La Fayette, and pointed out to Madame de La Fayette all the difficulties which awaited her, and the risk to her health, still so delicate, which she would incur.

But nothing could shake her resolution so firmly taken; and Madame and Mesdemoiselles de La Fayette left Altona a few days after their arrival, and turned their steps toward Vienna, where, at the request of the Prince de Rosemberg, a former friend of the Noailles, they were received by the Emperor, without the knowledge of his Ministers. Madame de La Fayette asked only the privilege for herself and daughters to share the prison of her husband.

"Oh, I will grant you that;" answered the Emperor: "As to setting him at liberty, that is impossible for me. My hands are tied." Doubtless ignorant himself of the régime at the prison of Olmutz, he declared that Monsieur de La Fayette was very well treated. After a week of waiting, the Minister of War came to place in the hands of Ma-

dame de La Fayette the permission so much desired.

"I must beg you to give careful reflection," he said, "upon the step you are about to take. I ought to warn you that you will have to submit to a régime that will have serious inconveniences both for you and your daughters."

But the Marquise was unwilling to listen to anything, and left Vienna the same day even for Olmutz. In spite of their extreme youth the daughters were as resolved as their mother. "How are we going to endure what awaits us on the morrow?" said Madame de La Fayette. The journey for them advanced slowly. At length the 1st October arrived. The morning had been foggy, when suddenly the sun mastered the clouds which darkened it, and on the horizon the old citadel of Olmutz silhouetted its two great towers against a sky of azure. At this view Madame de La Fayette could not restrain her emotion. Tears came, and standing up in the carriage she intoned with her daughters the Canticle of Tobias, thanking God for having safely brought them through such sufferings, sacrifices and efforts to the object of all their affection.

Since his arrest at Liège, Monsieur de La Fayette had been at first thrown into the prison of Magdebourg, with his two colleagues of the General As-

sembly, Messieurs de Bureau de Pusy and de Latour-Maubourg.

What this prison was is indescribable: boxed up in a cell three feet wide by five and a half feet long, mouldy with dampness and lighted only by a minute iron grill, the valorous general was burning with fever and tortured with insomnia. At last upon the order of the physician, a single hour of walking outside the cell was granted him; and thanks to the Government of the United States, a few letters from his wife were delivered to him, to some of which he tried to send answers by writing with a toothpick and lemon juice on the margin of some books lent to him.

He learned also, by one or two papers sent secretly to him, of the events which had taken place in France. The image of those scaffolds, standing through all that lugubrious year of 1793, haunted his imagination, made him tremble for those near to him, and plunged him into the depths of sadness. At the end of a year of these tortures, physical and moral, he was informed that Prussia and Austria had negotiated on the subject of his capture, and that, handed over to the Austrian Government, he was to be transferred to Olmutz, as well as his friends, from whom he continued to be separated, and who had never, during all their captivity, the

right to see him or mutually to exchange their news.

The régime of Olmutz was still more rigorous than Magdebourg—no paper, no ink, the white leaves of books torn out. He was three years without letters from his wife and without being able to write to her! Then it was that an American named Hugger, living in Vienna with his Hanoverian doctor, Monsieur Holman, got to the prisoner a plan which they had conceived for his escape. One day when accompanied by his keeper the general was making his usual promenade, he saw coming towards him two horsemen whom he was watching for. While Holman jumps quickly from his saddle, grasps and tries to gag the keeper, Hugger gives his horse to La Fayette and calls to him, "Go to Hoff." The general thinks he says, "Go off," and takes the first road he sees. When his friends arrive at Hoff, the rendezvous, they do not find La Fayette. Pursued, caught, brought back, La Fayette sees the prison doors close in upon him more rigidly than ever. The surveillance became more strict, and all going out was forbidden. Deprived of everything, sick in body and soul, with no communication with his kind, with no news of his wife, in ignorance of the fate of family and friends, and even of the names of those whose heads continued to fall on

the scaffold, La Fayette lay for a whole year in the bitterness of complete discouragement.

The morning of 1st October, 1785, he was seated at his tiny table, re-reading for the twentieth time the only book left him, when he heard in the little passageway that separated the two bolted entrances of his cell, a sound of unusual steps. The key turned in the lock, the door groaned on its hinges, and, opened. He saw standing before him Madame de La Fayette and his two daughters, who threw open their arms to him. He believed Heaven had opened! That God Himself had sent angels!

To describe the scene of this reunion is impossible for those who have not suffered as these wretched souls. Madame de La Fayette wears the mark upon her beautiful features of this suffering, and her misery has greatly changed her. Yet she has in her face a surprising calm, an air of resolution most imposing. Anastasie and Virginie, tall, slender, pretty, evoking admiration from their father who had aged very perceptibly. His cheeks are hollow, his lungs have caused him continual distress. But what matters now all the ills and all the sadness! They are once more reunited and rescued by the mutual support of their tenderness.

The régime of Olmutz was neither changed nor bettered. Even the forks found in the luggage of the Marquise were seized. She was refused permis-

sion to attend mass with her daughters on Sunday in the adjacent chapel where it was celebrated, permission to have a wife of one of the soldiers wait upon her, and refused permission to write to the Emperor, who had authorized her to make her requests directly to him. She was reminded at first that she had agreed to submit to the same treatment as that of her husband.

"I conform to that treatment with pleasure," she answers; "and we all three repeat it, that we are happier here in sharing the severity of the prison with Monsieur de La Fayette than anywhere else in the world without him."

They continue, therefore, to eat with their fingers from the pot in which their dinner was given them, where soup, meat and vegetables are mixed together, continue to wait upon themselves, to make their own beds, to shiver when it is cold, when a fire is lighted only two hours during the day, at six in the morning and at four in the evening. The young ladies have a tiny room with but one bed. To enter their parents' room, they have to pass under crossed swords of soldiers, which makes the oldest daughter blush to the ears, and the youngest assume a proud and scornful mien. How fine they are, self-forgetful, brave, proud, always gay, these daughters of the grand house of the Noailles! Anastasie,

with deft fingers, cuts out garments for her sister, mends her mother's gowns; and as her father's shoes have been already re-soled a dozen times and are worthless, she makes for him, from an old riding habit, a pair of stout slippers. Madame de La Fayette works under direction; the General tells stories; the rebellious Virginie weaves plots. She plans to put the prisoners in the other tower into communication with her parents. She arranges a code of signals from her window; at length she succeeds in dropping a basket suspended by a string to a functionary, whose interest she has won by her kindness. He takes from it the food she has saved for him and by the same basket sends up from the other tower of Monsieur de Latour Maubourg, a little letter filled with news!

But lack of air and exercise, the privations and the régime, end in exhausting the strength of Madame de La Fayette. She falls ill. Her family beg her to write to the Emperor for permission to go to Vienna to consult a physician. The request is rejected. If she goes out of Olmutz, it will be never to return.

"I have owed it to my family to beg necessary relief for my health,' responds Madame de La Fayette; "but they know that the price you thus put upon it will never be accepted by me. I will never

Chateau de Chavaniac
Fireplace

again expose myself to the horror of a separation from my husband." During eleven months she suffered from severe fever. No kindness was shown her. Not even an easy chair was granted her. From her miserable pallet she was borne to a common straw chair. It was during this illness that she wrote the biography of her mother, the Duchess d'Ayen, with a toothpick, a bit of "China ink," and upon the margin of the pages of a volume of Buffon. To read today these delicate pages, full of resignation and of such an extremely high moral character, it would seem as if one were reading the life of a saint, written by another saint.

The only chagrin that escaped the lips of Madame de La Fayette in those days of agony, was that of being without tidings of her son, for no communication with the United States whatsoever was permitted. But nothing changed the serenity, the saintliness, of this gentle invalid. "In seeing her always the same," says Madame de Lasteyrie, "always rejoicing in the good whenever she found it, and in the consolations which she had about her, we were less anxious than we ought to have been." The sympathy of all Europe, however, commenced to be aroused for the prisoners of Olmutz. The King of Prussia, the Emperor of Austria, received the most touching entreaties, and the most diverse: England with Fox,

America represented by Gouverneur Morris, made pressing and earnest efforts.

The 26th July 1797, the Emperor sent an emissary to Olmutz that liberty would be accorded La Fayette and his companions if they would take oath never again to put foot in Austria. This the prisoners proudly refused. "I have duties I owe to the United States and above all to France," answered La Fayette; "and I ought not to promise anything that could be contrary in any possible fashion to those rights which my country has in my person." Madame de La Fayette, although at the end of her endurance, approved highly the attitude of her husband, whose sentiments responded always to those which she most desired that he should have.

The Emperor, dissatisfied, seemed to lose all interest in the captives. New instances were necessary, and new devotion, to obtain, at last, on the 18th September, 1797, the opening of the prison doors of Olmutz. Monsieur de La Fayette had been imprisoned five years! his wife and daughters nearly two—twenty-three months. The departure from Olmutz was carried out under an officer charged with the duty of conducting them as far as the frontier of the hereditary states of Austria. This first stage of the journey was made with precaution.

At Dresden the Messieurs de Latour Maubourg

and de Pusy joined them. The joy of seeing one another again, and of feeling themselves once more free, was lessened only by the delicate health of Madame de La Fayette, whose exhausted condition was seriously augmented by the fatigue of the journey. All, moreover, after such a long captivity, were severely tried by the new air outside prison walls. But they quickly adjusted themselves to it, and day by day regained new strength. Everywhere they passed they were received with marks of enthusiastic kindness and sympathy. Arriving at Hamburg, they decided to go to rejoin Madame de Tessé and de Montaigu, whose affectionate devotion and unremitting efforts had contributed to their liberation. Madame de Tessé had bought a little place at Witmold, on the other side of the city of Ploen and separated from it by a lake. She had continued to shelter here Monsieur and Madame de Montaigu and their children. Their united resources were next to nothing. But on this farm there was a "basse-cour," some cows, a field of grain, a little apple orchard; and with some fishing of Monsieur de Tessé and the shooting preserves of Monsieur de Montaigu, one could live!

It was here that the prisoners of Olmutz were welcomed. When, after the German fashion, the postillion sounded the fanfare which announced their

approach, Madame de Montaigu could hardly restrain her excess of joy. She jumped into a little sail boat, crossed the lake, and ran to Ploen to meet her sister. She found in her sister, it seemed to her, also her mother, and the sister of Noailles and all whom she had lost. A little flotilla of small boats transported the escaped prisoners. The countenances of all were transfigured with happiness; and those of Monsieur de Montaigu and of Madame de Tessé, who awaited them on the shore, were not less radiant. The General had presented to his sister-in-law and to his aunt Monsieur de Latour-Maubourg, Messieurs de Pusy and de Lometh, who were established on the other side of the lake; but the waters of this small lake, ordinarily so placid, were constantly ruffled by the incessant coming and going of these gentlemen.

What charming reunions! What a new life in this home of Madame de Tessé! What gayety in the salon and at table. Everything was talked about, but above all politics, and when the conversation flagged Madame de Tessé quickly spurred it on.

Madame de Tessé was one of the most accomplished types of the women of the eighteenth century; piercing eyes, delicate mouth, a little drawn by slight nervous twitching, she yet had in speaking infinite grace and still more spirit, biting, sententious,

passionate, yet charitable and kind, always the central figure in all discussions.

As to La Fayette, he was so little changed that one grew young in listening to him. "Gilbert," wrote Madame de Montaigu, "is just as kind, just as simple in his manners, as in the past, just as affectionate with his friends, just as considerate in all disputes." He was unchanged to his last hour, preserving always the same liberal ideals, ready to risk his life anew for the high destiny which he craved for France.

Madame de La Fayette gradually grew better; carefully tended, protected by the tenderness of friends, she regained strength and gayety. Gifted with a mind of wide reach, very cultivated and accurate, with an eloquence natural to her, she knew how to argue with a manner embarrassing to her adversaries and put into her conversation what the finest art could add to natural tendencies.

A young and pure love soon blossomed in the midst of these diverse surroundings. Charles de Latour Maubourg, brother of the one imprisoned at Olmutz, had also come to Witmold. The grace, the charm, and the moral worth of Anastasie de La Fayette conquered his heart. The young girl had not a centime; all that had been left to her parents having been seized, pillaged and taken over by the Government. For the same reason the young man had

but thirty thousand francs, capital and income. But the young souls loved each other, and not-withstanding the protestations of Madame de Tessé, who pretended that only savages ever married without any money, Monsieur and Madame de La Fayette accepted the youthful suitor. Moreover the kind aunt harbored no ill will against them, but heartily joined her nieces in making the trousseau for the young fiancée, who was married the 9th of May, 1798, by an old proscribed abbé in the most beautiful room of the house. Her modest gown of muslin embroidered by her aunts, became her charmingly. The wedding was simple but touching, and all present, beginning with Madame de Tessé, who declared herself incredulous, but whose acts belied her words, were deeply moved.

Proscribed, Monsieur de La Fayette could not enter France, and at the end of a few months he hired a house at Vianen, in the neighborhood of Utrecht, and went to establish himself there with his family, including the young husband and wife. Madame de Grammont, Madame de Montaigu came to join them for a little while, but from the material point of view they lacked everything at Vianen. Notwithstanding the good will of Madame de La Fayette and the aid her sisters rendered her in putting their purse in common with hers, one fared but

lightly at the table of the General; and the mistress of the house had at times, as her only resources, to serve eggs "à la neige" as "plat de résistance" for fifteen or twenty hungry guests.

What laughter, what pleasant jokes these privations provoked! Nothing could detract from the happiness tasted by the sisters in this reunion. The cold was icy. In the evening they gathered in a room without any fire, muffled in their long "pelisses," and with little care for the wind which whistled through the cracks of the thin partitions, and for the "chauffrettes" which burnt out. Thus they passed at times the whole night, recalling the memories of the past and in prayer.

The great event of this year (1798) was the return from America of George de La Fayette. He brought back to his parents letters from Washington, and his own presence at Vianen was a joy beyond words to the heart of his mother. Madame de La Fayette, of whom alone the name had not been enrolled upon the list of the "Emigrés," could return to France, and never did her high spirit show such resourcefulness as in the business matters which she must disentangle for the welfare of the entire family. She succeeded in straightening out the whole matter of the succession of the Duchess d'Ayen, and in recovering a part of her property. "We are all, let

us hope, at the last year of our extreme embarrassment," she writes to her sister, "and there is much encouragement for continued activity in seeing what has been already accomplished."

In the division of the property she herself received from the inheritance of her mother the Château of "La Grange," to the great satisfaction of her husband, who writes to her, "Apparently you are at 'La Grange,' my dear heart, in that peaceful retreat, where we are destined, I hope, to find repose together from the vicissitudes of our life." But she did not lose from her sight for an instant the return of Monsieur de La Fayette, and made every possible arrangement which her good sense prompted. At length, on the "18th Brumaire," the 9th November, 1799, when the Directory was overturned, the Council of Five Hundred dissolved, and Bonaparte called to power, Madame de La Fayette, with her accurate weighing of the conditions, determined that it would be possible to return without hesitation and without authorization, and obtained for him a passport under a fictitious name. She had already obtained authorization for the return of her children and her son-in-law. "The joy of having seen Anastasie is inexpressible." Here is her letter of the 7th November:

"As to Virginie she is charming; the delicacy of her spirit and of her judgment, the elevation of

her soul, all this it is a pleasure to see developing in her."

Monsieur de La Fayette left Vianen as soon as he received the passport obtained through his wife, and started on his journey to a friend's house in Paris. He wrote at once a letter to Bonaparte, who showed signs of displeasure. Madame de La Fayette went to see him, and was received in a courteous fashion. "The arrival of Monsieur de La Fayette," said he, "blocks my course in re-establishing my principles, and forces me to sail close to the wind. I conjure him, therefore, to avoid all display."

"That is my husband's intention," she replied; and the day after they left for the Château de La Grange. This Château is one of the most beautiful of "La Brie," and dates, it is said, from the First Crusades. Its old walls are blackened by time, its battlements austere, its massive entrance framed in by two great towers, and its arch festooned with thick masses of ivy. The court is spacious, enclosed on all sides except on the right, where an outlook upon the surrounding country is had, graceful and beautiful with its meadows which descend to the river bank, and its woods which hem in the horizon. Here the prisoners of Olmutz felt the soothing influences of a home, and their days passed quickly and agreeably. Monsieur de La Fayette ploughed, planted, raised cattle, and

directed all the affairs of the farm, to the great delight of his wife, who now led the sort of life she had always wished for.

Little by little, largely because of her influence, the "émigrés" of Witmold were re-established in France. Madame de Montaigu, Madame de Tessé, and many of the friends of those "evil days," and among the most distinguished Charles Fox and his wife must be mentioned, came to visit them at "La Grange." Virginie was married here to Monsieur Louis de Lasteyrie, a handsome young man, kind and intelligent, whom Madame de Montaigu had presented to her niece, and who was pleasing to her in every way. She was nineteen, but her animated face was so fresh and blooming that she would be thought to be hardly fifteen. George de La Fayette, who had a passionate desire to serve France, obtained the rank of lieutenant in a regiment of the Hussars; but Bonaparte, because of his father, did not like him, and in spite of his devotion and heroism, he made his career very difficult for him. La Fayette, who maintained a reserved manner with the First Consul, emphasized this reserve in proportion as the Emperor made himself more powerful. He did not consider him as the true representative of the principles of 1789. On the other hand, the Royalists, while visiting at La Grange, ridiculed the monar-

chical pomp and ceremony revived by Napoleon. It was a war of words, witty, satirical, at times profound.

Madame de La Fayette continued to receive her visitors with her exquisite charm. She gave herself freely to all, but devoted herself to the most serious matters. Her pecuniary resources still remained reduced, as also those of her sister, Madame de Montaigu, but they both resolved to erect a monument to the memory of the Duchess d'Ayen, and of the Viscountess de Noailles, on the sacred spot where they had been buried. It was owing to a poor working woman, Mademoiselle Paris, that they learned that during the last weeks of The Terror, the thirteen hundred victims of the scaffold had been thrown into a single pit,—at Picpus, on the St. Mandé road in Paris, in a vacant lot near an old monastery. They opened a subscription among the relatives of the massacred, and as time passed the undertaking developed. Tombs were erected. The names of 1,310 victims were engraved upon tablets of bronze. A chapel was built and nuns were installed in the convent, bought and restored.

This work at Picpus was the last of her tasks, and the supreme consolation of the Marquise, whose health became seriously affected.

George de La Fayette, becoming discouraged, had

returned to live at La Grange with his charming wife, Emilie de Tracy, who surrounded her mother-in-law with the same tenderness as that lavished upon her by her own daughters, Madame de Latour Maubourg and Madame de Lasteyrie. The three families were living near her at Paris, at Madame de Tessé's, when in December, 1807, the invalid entered into that period of suffering from which she never emerged. God and her husband were the absorbing thought of her last moments. "Even in her delirium," wrote the General, in an admirable letter to Monsieur de Latour Maubourg, "she preserved an unchanging gentleness, and that wish always to find something kind to say, that gratitude for all the thoughtful attentions shown her, that fear of tiring others, that sense of the need of being useful to others, that subtlety in the definition of her thoughts, that sense of right and that elegance which evoked the admiration of all who knew her."

Madame de La Fayette is at her last hour, but her heart remains alert. Her sister, Madame de Montaigu, Madame de Latour Maubourg, Monsieur and Madame George de La Fayette, Madame de Lasteyrie, carrying in her arms her youngest child, surround her, stifling their sobs.

"Be submissive, my children," says the dying friend; "have faith in God, and remember that word

of the Prophet, 'Say to the just that all goes well for him.' " She calls her husband. "How happy I have been. "What a privilege to be your wife." And a little later; "Are you a Christian?" she asks him. "Ah!—No—I understand.—You are above all a 'La Fayettist!' "

"You are also, I think," replies the General, with a smile of sadness.

"Yes," she answers, firmly; "and I would have given my life for that 'sect,' yet before everything else one must be a Christian."

She has read to her prayers for the dying, blesses for the last time her children, holds her husband's hand in hers, murmurs once more, "I am all yours," and quietly passes away.

The Marquise de La Fayette, this woman so high minded, so heroic in the tragic events of life, so kind, so affable, so simple in the daily routine, so French and so Catholic—is dead!

It is the 24th December. It is midnight! How striking is the harmony of the coincidence of this date and the hour, in the presence of such a soul! In the chamber of death, where, from the church hard by mounts the joyous sound of the Christmas bells and the voices of the singers of the canticle of the "Coming of the Lord" and of the "Gloria in Excelsis," the beautiful but emaciated face of Ma-

dame de La Fayette is radiant with an immortal serenity. It will ever remain a precious souvenir in the minds of those who are there, now desolate, who weep for her, like that star of the solemn night which shall guide them towards the eternal haven where now she herself is already arrived.

At Picpus, according to her wish, her burial took place.

The General preserved a passionate cult for his wife, without whose companionship he must go on living for twenty-seven years. For several years he was unwilling to quit La Grange, where he could keep nearer to him the memory of her, without whom, he said, there was for him in life neither happiness nor prosperity possible. When he was sent back to active and to political life, how often did he regret not having longer at his command the wise counsels and the aid of that remarkable woman, who was also his very conscience! In that triumphal journey in America in 1824, which he made as the guest of the President of the United States, of which history in its most pompous narrative has nothing to equal, he writes, "I am always mediating upon that admirable sentiment which compelled her, like an instinct, to push us towards the United States. Ah, if we could have but kept her with us to enjoy what she seemed to foresee!" How proud she would have been in-

deed of the homage rendered her husband by that nation, so grateful for his services, so persevering in its friendliness, and so generous in its liberality!

When in 1834 the General, enfeebled by age, his influence diminished by recent political events, felt his end approaching, he was seen searching with trembling hand the locket he always wore about his neck, containing the portrait of his wife. He would grasp it and press it to his lips!

"Thus," says Monsieur Guizot, "always separated from the entire world, alone with his thoughts and alone with the image of the companion of his life, La Fayette died!"

At Picpus also he was buried, by the side of her who, according to her own expression, had "passionately and worldly yet Christianly" loved him.

Ralph Fletcher Seymour
Publisher
Fine Arts Building, Chicago

W9-DCL-223